

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A PVD process for coating substrates, wherein the substrate is pre-treated in the vapour of a pulsed, magnetic field-assisted cathode sputtering operation, and during pre-treatment a magnetic field arrangement of a magnetron cathode, with a strength of the horizontal component in front of the target of 100 to 1500 Gauss, is used for magnetic field assistance, and wherein after pre-treatment further coating is effected by means of cathode sputtering, with the power density of the pulsed discharge pulse, magnetic field assisted cathode sputtering operation, during pre-treatment being greater than  $1000 \text{ W.cm}^{-2}$ .
2. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the power density falls within the range from 2000 to  $3000 \text{ W.cm}^{-2}$ .
3. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein a pulse duration (on-time) ranges between 10 and  $1000 \mu\text{s}$ , and that a pulse interval (repetition period) is between 0.2 ms and 1000 s.
4. (Currently Amended) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the pulse duration is  $50 \mu\text{s}$  and the pulse interval is 20 ms.
5. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein magnetron discharge is distributed over a cathode surface area and occupies at least 50 % of the surface area.

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6. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 5 wherein the discharge is distributed over 70-90 % of a cathode surface area.
7. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein an average pulsed discharge current density is less than 10 A.cm<sup>-2</sup>.
8. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein a localised maximum pulsed discharge current density is less than 100 A.cm<sup>-2</sup>.
9. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein pulses which arc generated have a peak voltage from 0.5 to 2.5 kV.
10. (Currently Amended) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein pre-treatment with ~~a~~ the magnetic field-assisted cathode sputtering operation is conducted in a non-reactive atmosphere, selected from a group consisting of Ne, Ar, Kr and Xe, with targets which ~~included~~ includes material selected from a group consisting of Cr, V, Ti, Zr, Mo, W, Nb and Ta.
11. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein pre-treatment is effected with Ar in the pressure range from 10<sup>-5</sup> to 10<sup>-1</sup> mbar.

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12. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein pre-treatment is effected with Ar at a pressure of  $10^{-3}$  mbar.
13. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein during pre-treatment a negative bias voltage within the range from 0.5 to 1.5 kV is applied to the substrates, so that an etching or cleaning process is initiated simultaneously with an ion implantation process (ABS technique).
14. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 13 wherein the negative bias voltage is pulsed with pulse widths of 2  $\mu$ s to 20 ms and a pulse interval which is likewise 2  $\mu$ s to 20 ms.
15. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the coating formed by cathode sputtering consists of the nitrides TiN, ZrN, TiAlN, TiZrN, TiWN, TiNbN, TiTaN, TiBN or the carbonitrides TiCN, ZrCN, TiAlCN, TiZrCN, TiVCN, TiNbCN, TiTaCN or TiBCN.
16. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the coating contains 0.1 to 5 atomic % of an element selected from the group of Sc, Y, La and Ce.
17. (Currently Amended) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the ~~coatings consist~~ coating consists of nanometre-scale multi-layer coatings with a periodicity of 1 to 10 nm, from the group comprising TiN/TiAlN, TiN/VN, TiN/NbN, TiN/TaN, TiN/ZrN, TiAlN/CrN, TiAlN/ZrN, TiAlN/VN, CrN/NbN, CrN/TaN, CrN/TiN, Cr/C, Ti/C, Zr/C, V/C, Nb/C or Ta/C.

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18. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 17 wherein one of the cited individual layers contains 0.1 to 5 atomic % of an element selected from the group of Sc, Y, La and Ce.
19. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 17 wherein both of the cited individual layers contain 0.1 to 5 atomic % of an element selected from the group of Sc, Y, La and Ce.
20. (Previously Presented) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the cathode sputtering employed during coating is unbalanced magnetron sputtering.
21. (Original) A process in accordance with Claim 1 wherein identical cathodes and identical magnetic field arrangements are used for pre-treatment and coating.
22. (Currently Amended) A process in accordance with Claim 21 wherein specific adaptations of the a magnetic field strength are made, by adjusting the distance of a magnet array from a target surface, in order to optimise the pre-treatment and coating operations.
23. (Cancelled)
24. (Cancelled)

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